



SECTION 1

THE ROLE OF IMC AND ICMCI IN FOSTERING PROFESSIONALISM

By: David Iornem, FIMC. CMC



Certification
WORKSHOP

SECTION 1.

Introduction:

This paper is based solely on policy documents of the International Council of Management Consulting Institutes (ICMCI). Such documents include the Constitution of the Council, decisions reached at its various Congresses and working Sessions, and the strategic plan of the Council.

Purposes of the ICMCI

The purpose of ICMCI organisation is to:

1. Enhance the flow of information between the existing national certifying bodies of management consultants in order to increase the knowledge of the process, encourage assistance between institutes and improve the process of certification throughout the world
2. Elevate the standards of management consultants worldwide while increasing the acceptance of management consulting as a respected profession.
3. Encourage the networking of management consultants across national boundaries, thus, improving the free flow of information and developing a greater cooperative spirit among countries.
4. Encourage reciprocity between institutes with recognised universal standards and adherence to an International Code of Professional Conduct.

Membership

Admission to the Institute is open to the certifying body of any country which:

1. is a legal entity and has been in existence for four year or more
2. Is the recognised national professional organisation or independent management consultants and is formally committed to maintaining the highest professional standards among its members
3. has a formal certification/registration process
4. has a Code of Professional Conduct
5. has a governing Council or Committee prepared and empowered to affirm on behalf of its members support for the aims and objectives of ICMCI and agreement in principle to such international standards (definitions, codes, guidelines, etc) as may be agreed from time to time by the International Council. The

current standards promotion programmes of ICMCI are founded on a survey, which was conducted internationally in 1997. I will provide details.

CMC Standards Survey - September 1997

Background

At the ICMCI Conference in Vienna in June 1996, the results of a survey of members and associate countries, conducted by Australia, were presented. The Results illustrated the

extent to which CMC has become the international standard in management consulting, but also identified interpretations of CMC among members.

As a result of the apparent discrepancies in the use and interpretation of CMC, the Vienna conference resolved to form a programme committee to work towards agreed common standards. The members of the committee were from Australia, Ireland, South Africa and the United Kingdom.

Findings

Completed surveys were received from 21 countries including Nigeria. Data was not received from Malaysia, Poland or from new members i.e. Bangladesh, Germany, Indonesia, Norway and the Philippines. CMC is widely used by ICMCI members, most adopting it over the last 2 to 4 years. The table displays information on the extent of use of the CMC mark. Canada and United States of America were the first to use the CMC however. Among the countries using CMC, 14 still do not have a specific policy covering its use and application.

CMC has trademarked or has been given an equivalent form of registered protection in four countries, as well as registration applications pending in a further two countries.

Criteria For Initial Attainment of CMC

All member countries, apart from Malaysia which is currently reviewing the introduction of CMC, require a university degree or equivalent educational qualification. In the case of Australia, Canada, Denmark, France, Ireland, Switzerland and the United Kingdom, individuals without a degree, but with at least eight years management consulting, may be considered for initial membership of their Institutes. The experience is that candidates requesting consideration on these grounds are few, and must have exceptionally strong claims to convince chapter membership committees of their ability to meet the admission standards.

All countries require the individual to have prior management consulting experience to become a CMC. In most cases this is set at three years, but India, Netherlands and Switzerland .require five years and Austria two years. Full time consulting is defined by most countries as between 800 to] 200 client related hours per year.

There is wide variation for determining CMC admission, with a preference for peer interviews. There are only three countries using examination alone, seven using an interview alone and a further six using both examination and interview. The most usual additional requirements for attaining CMC are client references' and assignment summaries. India and Singapore require the consultant to be of a certain age.

The USA uses aggregate points system, based on education, work experience assignment summaries, and professional activities, to determine eligibility to attend a CMC ethics examination and certification panel interview.

There are uneven levels of activity in relation to the promotion of CMC. The survey revealed that all countries with CMC regularly review their admission processes, some quite regular, others on an ad hoc basis.

CMC Maintenance Processes

The survey indicated that some countries, do not actively promote the CMC mark or brand name. Austria, Canada, France and Malaysia have legislation or regulatory framework to govern professional registration, including the management consulting profession.

Australia appears to be the only country which links CMC to a practicing certificate and requires the individual to meet certain practice hours and continuing education requirements each year to maintain the certificate. Most other member countries indicated in survey response that their CMC license is basically indefinite, once issued. In Switzerland, there is a recertification for CMC's every three years.

Canada and Austria, use the CMC concept to signify competency. In Australia, individuals-are graded permanently as CMC, but must reapply annually for a practicing certificate, which is only issued if they have practised full time as a management consultant in the preceding year, undertaken a specified amount of approved continuing education and remained financial members of their local state chapter. If they fail to meet these criteria, they are recorded on the membership database as "non-practising CMC".

Summary

It is evident from the data that most countries and associates of ICMCI have adopted CMC as the standard for identifying experienced individuals, practising as professional management consultants, who are members of their country's institute.

There is significant variation in the processes adopted across countries to assess individuals for attainment of CMC. This ranges from the situation where anyone who is a member of an institute is entitled to use CMC, such as Ireland, through to the USA with an aggregate points system covering education, experience and professional development, as well as an ethics examination and peer interview.

Conclusions

There are a number of conclusions which may be drawn from the survey. These are:

1. CMC is actively accepted and used by most ICMCI members as an international standard to signify experienced management consultants.
2. There are policy statements in only six countries to reinforce CMC and these are generally based on ICMCI policy.
3. The criteria for attainment of CMC have several common elements, such as minimum education and experience, but vary in terms of additional criteria.
4. There is clearly no agreed approach to use or content of exams, peer interview panels, client references or assignment summaries to assess CMCs. There is the very real prospect of a parochial bias for admission as a CMC, in the absence of an agreed approach for assessment.
5. There is an unresolved dichotomy between those countries promoting a strong regulatory framework to control the consulting profession, versus others who prefer to rely on the marketplace as the regulator.
6. There are few guide lines and considerable scope for improvement, in the use and promotion of the CMC mark and brand. To ensure international protection, the majority of countries need to trademark or register the CMC mark.

CMC tends to be used as a grade of membership, rather than as an indicator of competency. Scope exists to reinforce the idea that CMC is a mark of competency, by approaches such as the annual issuing of a practicing certificate or license, based on undertaking continuing education and minimum consulting practice hours.

NEW DIRECTIONS

Arising from the above findings and conclusions the ICMCI took certain decisions at the 1997 Cape Town Congress designed to usher in a regime of common approaches and practices that can increase adherence to common standards. These are:

1. That with immediate effect, the Governing Boards of member Institutes should adopt the ICMCI Code of Ethics and integrate same into the Codes of their respective national Institutes. All member Institutes have already complied.

2. To develop and adopt a Uniform Body of Knowledge (UBK). A lot of work has been done in this area. A UBK Committee was set up at the Cape Town Congress. It submitted a report at the Go a Working Session in November 1998. The report has been adopted for implementation.
3. Minimum standards have been set for the CMC designation. A degree or equivalent level of training plus suitable experience is required. Exceptionally, consultants without a degree but with minimum of 8 years in consulting position may be admitted.
4. Only one single national Institute in each country is accredited to grant the CMC. The IMC is the body so accredited in Nigeria.
5. National Institutes are to seek legal protection through legislation or copy right registration of the CMC mark. The IMC is nearly there. Our application to register the CMC as a Trade Mark has been approved.
6. To increase the global significance, recognition and visibility of the CMC qualification, the ICMCI is spearheading the formation of consulting Institutes in countries that do not have one. The IMC of Nigeria is mentoring the initiatives in Tanzania, Kenya, Sierra Leone, Zambia and Honk Kong.
7. Continuing education has been adopted by member Institutes for revalidation of the CMC qualification. Most members revalidate after 12 months. Others have variations ranging from 2 to 3 years. The plan is to get all members to adopt] 2 months.
8. Minimum of 800 consulting hours has been adopted by member Institutes for revalidation as CMC.

What should a Consultant be Competent in?

Outlined here are the types of elements that consultants should be competent in. Tracing the stages of the client-consultant relationship is a useful guideline as to the generic path that assessments follow and. It provides the most inclusive scenario while identifying the characteristics of required actions and competence benchmarks.

Clearly, certain projects may not require (e.g.) implementation, and others may not require Phase 1, or 2, due to the nature of repeat business.

1. The client-consultant relationship

Phase 1: *Prospecting and Approach*

- marketing of services
- exploring opportunities
- impressing from first contact

Phase 2: *Proposal and Entry*

- Understanding the client
- recognising a client need
- clarifying the client need
- exploring potential for success of project
- providing estimates and billing strategy.

Phase 3: *Performance- Strategy for Solutions*

- selecting method of intervention
- isolating the problem
- understand scope of problem
- exploring client's readiness for change
- hypothesizing
- interviewing
- exercising fact-finding methods
- applying analytical methods
- applying diagnostic tools
- identifying benefits
- dealing with client managers

Phase 4: *Implementation and Exit*

- applying solution development methods
- validating recommendations
- implementing
- relating back to expectations
- applying contingency plans
- evaluating
- closing

Phase 5: *Post-Engagement Activities*

- maintaining the relationship

2. Effectiveness in Consulting diagnostic ability

- solution and implementation
- general and specialised knowledge as defined by PESTLE and

management

- communication skills
 - managerial skills marketing and selling skills
-

QUESTION

1. What is the purpose of the ICMCI (CMC-Global) ?

IMC - Nigeria

